

## **Phase II National Plan Review Notes**

### **Eric Holdeman**

Recently four full days were spent with three consultants representing the Department of Homeland Security. They were here to validate the Phase I Planning Review that was submitted jointly by King County and City of Seattle under the Executive's and Mayor's signatures. Prior to their arrival several joint staff meetings were held in preparation for this review. Besides emergency managers our Departments of Transportation, Public Health and DNR-P had staff participate in these meetings. Rich Tokarzewski of our OEM staff prepared our documentation.

The review team was led by Jim Greene, former Emergency Management Director for the State of Montana. He is also a former President of the National Association of Emergency Managers (NEMA). The other two staff members (one was a local emergency manager from Montana) were knowledgeable of the emergency management subject area. They spent two days reviewing the State's plans and two days reviewing the City's and County's plans. We had an excellent give and take. It certainly was the best and most comprehensive collective review of our plans ever undertaken either internally or externally.

At the conclusion of the review they provided the following brief comments:

#### Strengths

- The legal authorities (laws) are generally in good shape.
- We have strong organizations and a strong regional approach (we were the only area visited that collectively participated in the entire four day review process)
- We have had extensive experience with disasters
- There is a strong spirit of cooperation and coordination
- We have many best practices that should be shared nationally
- Local government support is good overall
- There is an emphasis on mitigation
- We exercise frequently
- Our plans are relatively outstanding, there is a robust set of plans
- Our level of inclusion of the private sector is a best practice

#### Weaknesses

- Continuity of Government Plans (COOP) for State Government needs work at the agency level
- Are the exercises we do strenuous enough? Should we be using more "worst case" scenarios?
- The American Red Cross role is narrowly defined in this region
- Special needs populations. While much has been done and is being done, still more work is needed
- The Federal [I would also add Washington State legislative] level of support is weak in the area of science and technology in order to support our Emergency Management needs

- We have good intuition on what we need to be working on, they suggested that we document it in writing

Adding my two cents...we have and generally can handle any "routine" disaster. However, our worst case disasters of flu pandemic and earthquakes can be catastrophic and these will test our abilities and push us to the extreme. In the end with these scenarios it could really be bad, our worst nightmare!